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THE
B O O K
OF
SEVEN CHAPTERS.

CONTAINING
A NEW SYSTEM
OF
NATIONAL POLICY.

WITH
A POSTSCRIPT ON PARLIAMENTARY
ELOCUTION,
AND AN UTOPIAN SCHEME FOR THE CONSI-
DERATION OF THE REV. MR. WYVILL.

L O N D O N:

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DEDICATION.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM PITT,
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

ADVICE is a gift that seldom confers an obligation : it is often received ungraciously, and frequently gives offence. For these reasons, none but a fool or a madman will

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will advise a Minister of State, unless he feel himself as independent as the writer of this volume. I beg pardon; the following few pages hardly deserve to be called a volume: they contain the *primæ linie* only of a new system of policy. I dedicate them to you, Sir, not because you are the son of the great WILLIAM PITT; not because you possess talents superior to the present race of men; not because you are the Prime Minister of a powerful kingdom; but because I believe

4 you

DEDICATION. v

you to be, *the noblest work of*
God, AN HONEST MAN.

I have the honour to be,

Your most obedient,

Humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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THE
B O O K
OF
SEVEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

LORD CHATHAM—ADULATION—IN-
TEGRITY—DISSIMULATION—DR.
FRANKLIN—BRITISH EMBASSADOR
—PLAIN DEALING.

IT was a daring exertion of pa-
triotism to snatch the reins from
a mad Phaeton in the midst of his
career ; in the very instant when the

B chariot

chariot was on the brink of perdition; but I am exceedingly doubtful, that the best intentions, in conjunction with the highest abilities, are sufficient to save this country.

Ancient history, particularly that of Greece, affords examples of states, on the verge of annihilation, rescued by the manly exertions of a virtuous individual; and we have a recent example in a Mr. William Pitt, late Lord Chatham, who, from a state of humiliation and despondency, raised his country to a high degree of reputation and power:



power : but that minister was so singular a man, that two such characters are hardly to be expected in the same century. Mr. Pitt's talents, like those of Pericles, were exerted in the humiliation of a powerful neighbouring potentate, in preserving his country from the insults of a foreign enemy. The minister of a distressed kingdom, in time of war, has some dependence on fortuitous events : " the race is " not always to the swift, nor the " battle to the strong." One fortunate campaign, nay a single victory, may possibly save his coun-

try. The prime minister of a kingdom, whose distresses arise solely from an enormous weight of debts and taxes, hath no such consolation: Fortune can do nothing for him: his talents, his resolution, his virtue, are his entire dependencies.

A sagacious prime minister in this country, and in these times, cannot be insensible of the dangers which surround him; the faction with which he must contend, and the thousand impediments which dishonesty, ill-humour, and disappointment,

pointment, will throw in his way. But he has a more powerful enemy than any of these to encounter ; an enemy that has often triumphed over kings and ministers of extraordinary abilities : I mean adulation : not that diaphonous blandishment by which persons of ordinary capacity are cajoled ; not that disgusting incense with which the nostrils of exalted imbecillity are generally regaled : no ; the adulation which will meditate his overthrow will be clad in the garb of patriotism, and wear the mask of sincerity. She will begin by a feeble, a quali-

fied opposition; her next step will be a temporary silence; she then becomes a convert to his opinions, and finally a strenuous supporter of all his political measures.

As he estimates his ministerial existence, he will carefully avoid the slightest connexion with these renegados. Members of either House sometimes change their political conduct; but are very rarely influenced by argument, to alter their private opinions. The most powerful exertions of reason and elocution are generally insufficient
to

to attract a single vote from the adverse party : miraculous conversions therefore bring suspicion along with them.

There is no species of villainy so dangerous to an upright minister, as that which comes wrapped in the cloak of integrity, and an honest zeal to do him service. Such villains are finely delineated in the character of Iago. “ This fellow “ (exclaims the Moor) is of exceeding honesty !” A more extensive knowledge of mankind would have saved Othello from perdition.

There is no security so effectual against the machinations of these state Iagos as inflexible integrity of heart, influenced by that degree of suspicion which arises from a knowledge of the world. Political writers indeed are so far from considering virtue as essential to a prime minister, that they deem it incompatible with his situation. Nevertheless, I trust in God, I shall be able to prove, not only that a wise and successful statesman may be virtuous; but that scrupulous integrity is a *sine qua non* in the character of a great minister.

In

In answer to this strange assertion, I shall probably be told, that history, particularly that of our own country, affords scarce a single example of a minister whose virtue did not frequently bend to state policy. I am sorry that contrary examples are so rare; but I am very certain, that it would have been much better both for themselves and for the states they governed, if they had been more frequent. As to themselves, what says the fallen Wolsey?—

“ O

—— “ O Cromwell, Cromwell !
 “ Had I but served my God with half the
 “ zeal
 “ I served my king, he would not in
 “ mine age
 “ Have left me naked to mine enemies.”

Wolsey should have said—

Had I but served my God with half the
 zeal
 I served MYSELF ———

His king was a secondary ob-
 ject—*Ego et rex meus*. There are,
 I believe, quondam ministers, now
 living, who, with Wolsey, sincerely
 repent that they neglected to serve
 their

their God. That unfortunate minister, who ostensibly conducted the American war, might certainly have prevented the miserable catastrophe of his administration by a steady adherence to truth and justice. In deploring the effect of that administration, I do not consider the loss of thirteen provinces as a misfortune to this nation; that misfortune is to the provinces themselves: our sole misfortune is the enormous national debt accumulated in the contest.

That

That the prosperity of a state depends principally on the wisdom of those by whom it is governed, is a maxim which admits of no dispute ; but this maxim can never be applied to any salutary purpose, until we clearly comprehend what is meant by the wisdom of a statesman. This wisdom is, I think, generally allowed to consist principally in the art of dissimulation ; in the faculty of discovering the sentiments and designs of other men and of concealing his own ; in the sublime art of enveloping his most trivial words and actions in impenetrable

trable ambiguity. In his negotiations with foreign ministers he is allowed full liberty to practise every species of falsehood and deception for the advantage of his king and country : in short, his conduct, as a minister, may be such as, in the character of a gentleman, would render him notoriously infamous.

It is very hard that a prime minister should be obliged to sacrifice his soul for the good of the state ! Nevertheless, if it can be proved that these Machiavellian politics are the only means of success,

cess, a strong plea might be drawn from necessity. But I assert, that no such proof can be adduced, and I appeal to the history of all nations in support of this assertion.

When Franklin was imprudently expelled this kingdom, he naturally sought refuge in the Court of France. We had then an ambassador at Paris, a consummate politician, long hacknied in court dissimulation, and perfectly satisfied of his abilities to counteract the designs of a poor, a contemptible American. Franklin told a plain, an artless

artless tale to the French ministry. The ambassador was outwitted, and had the mortification to see his country stabbed to the heart.—

What could he have done?—I will tell you. He should have retrieved the blunder of the British ministry, in insulting a man whose friendship was of more importance than that of all the potentates in Europe. He should have known that an union between France and America would infallibly be destructive to Britain. He should have known that Franklin was at that in-

instant the most considerable personage in Europe. He should have courted his friendship, and conversed with him cordially and ingenuously. This founder of the American States, to the very moment of signing the fatal treaty with France, sincerely wished to save the British empire; and nothing but the infernal policy of our ministry, and their foolish instruments, could have prevented a re-union with the Colonies on terms equitable and honourable to both nations. Plain dealing and common honesty would have

have saved a hundred millions of pounds sterling, thirteen Provinces, and the lives of a hundred thousand men.

C

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.

PATRIOTISM—ROSNY—HENRY IV. OF
FRANCE—VIRTUE—LORD NORTH—
AMERICAN WAR—LOANS—AL-
LIANCES—SIEGE OF FONTENOY.

PATRIOTISM hath in all ages been considered as the first and most essential virtue of a good citizen. It may be so; but I am much mistaken if this idea hath not been carried too far. What is patriotism? Is it that *amor patriæ* which instigated an Alexander, a Roman Emperor, a Philip II. a
Lewis

Lewis XIV. to extend his dominions by force of arms, regardless of every principle of right and justice? Is it that *amor patriæ* which extorts ignominious, inequitable concessions from a vanquished enemy? Is it that *amor patriæ* which prompts a crafty statesman to deceive and circumvent the plenipotentiaries of other nations? If this be patriotism, I disclaim it. It is not a virtue, but an abominable vice. It is strange that mankind should ever have imagined, that public and private virtue are not the same thing. Virtue, like

C 2

truth,

truth, is immutable, and, like truth, can never be altered or modified by time, circumstance, or situation. A virtuous man will be uniformly virtuous, whether he be a prime minister or a plow-man.

The great Sully, speaking of the persons appointed by the King to treat with the Duke of Guise, has these words—"To shew their
 " skill in negociation, they began
 " with that artifice and equivocation
 " which false policy hath substituted
 " in the place of that ingenuous,
 " that frank and open conduct,
 " which

“ which, without a crime, is always
 “ more effectual.”—Such was the
 opinion of that truly great and vir-
 tuous minister; who, by inflexible
 integrity, resolution, and a manly
 exertion of superior abilities, extri-
 cated his country from a state of
 confusion, perplexity, and indi-
 gence, and raised her to a degree
 of opulence and magnitude that
 astonished Europe.

Rosny's political talents were
 doubtless very great; but that po-
 sitive virtue, which abashed his less
 scrupulous competitors for power,

was not only the principal cause of his advancement, but the cause also of his successful administration. His master, Henry IV. possessed good natural abilities, some acquired knowledge, and considerable discernment; but he was so abject a slave to his passions, that had it not been for Sully's influence, I had almost said *authority*, so far from acquiring the title of *Henri le Grand*, he would hardly have been distinguished from other weak and profligate kings of France: so much it is in the power of an

able

able minister to give dignity and
immortality to his sovereign !

No minister ever sacrificed his
virtue, without immediately, or
ultimately, injuring himself, his
king, or his country. There is no
need of a pedantic display of histo-
rical erudition to prove this fact.
Human nature, we are told, is
naturally prone to vice. It may be
so ; I am nevertheless convinced,
from the experience of many ages,
that there is an intrinsic power in
virtue, before which the flimsy

windings of political *chicane* will fly,
like chaff before the wind.

In thus recommending an inviolable adherence to truth and equity, I do not confine myself to foreign negociation. Nations ever have been, and ever will be, best governed, internally, in proportion to the honesty of their kings and ministers. The history of our own kings affords innumerable examples of this truth. James I. was a consummate politician, without a single virtue. The misfortunes of Charles I. are justly ascribed to his propensity

penalty to political refinement, and a total disregard to truth and justice : a little common honesty would have saved his head.

But recent examples have greater weight. We can better judge of what we have all seen and felt. The minister, who conducted the war against our fellow-subjects in America, wants neither capacity nor learning : he is acquainted with the British constitution, and is tolerably well versed in the sublime science of stock-jobbing : he possesses a considerable share of wit and humour.

mour. Such talents are sufficient to excite attention in the House of Commons; but they are not the talents which constitute the character of a great minister. What were his defects? Want of system, want of resolution, want of virtue, and a total want of judgement in the choice of his instruments civil and military. The effects of such an administration were so natural, that they might have been foretold by a child.

When the dispute with America began, the minister should have asked

asked himself the following questions—Have not the subjects of the British empire a right to complain when they think the measures of administration tyrannical?—Have they not a right to remonstrate, when their complaints are disregarded?—Have they not a right to defend their liberty by force of arms, when their remonstrances are treated with contempt, and an army sent to compel them to unconditional submission?—Is it just, is it manly, to skulk behind the resolutions of a parliament, in which I command a decided majority?—

rity?—Is it possible to wage a continental war against colonies so distant, so extensive, and so populous, without ruin to the mother-country? Would not an infant have answered these questions rationally? A very small degree of common sense and common honesty would have saved the colonies, saved the nation, and saved the minister.

But why did I say, saved *the minister*? Is he not safe? Can any man be more easy and secure than he appears to be, whilst pun-
 ning,

ning, laughing, and joking in the British Senate. Would a Roman Senate have been thus amused? Would any nation under the sun have suffered such an offender to sport with the misfortunes of his country; to triumph in the reward of his iniquity! Places, pensions, to the amount of ten thousand pounds per annum! Good God! is there not, in this dispirited, this pusillanimous nation, virtue sufficient to punish such a delinquent? Is it possible for the most loyal subject in the king's dominions to pay the taxes imposed by this man, with-

without recollecting, with indignation, that he is still a Member of Parliament, Warden of the Cinque Ports, and enjoys a pension of four thousand pounds a year? The punishment of vice is the beginning of virtue. If an expiatory sacrifice was ever necessary to the prosperity of a nation!——but enough of this abominable subject. I have done with his crimes and his rapacity; but I beg your attention to other material blemishes in his character as a minister, which, exclusive of his total want of virtue, were amply sufficient to disqualify him

him for the high office for which he was raised. I am not apprehensive that the present minister will ever split on the same rocks, nevertheless there can be no harm in pointing them out.

This noble Lord was not less rapacious of power than of wealth. His colleagues in office will tell you, (particularly the American secretary) that he perpetually grasped at the proper business of every department; that his *fiat* was essential to the most minute transaction; and that, in consequence
of

of this monopoly of power, the most salutary measures were constantly rendered abortive by procrastination and final irresolution. No clew but this will conduct us through the labyrinth of his administration. This was a capital fault in a man who required so many hours for social and private enjoyment.

This singular inclination, to do every thing himself, would have been less surprising, if he had possessed that decisive *coup d'oil* by which some men instantly discriminate and determine without hesitation ;

tion; but he was so far from having this talent, that he invariably referred the most trivial concerns to a consultation with his dependants; some of these were men whose knowledge and abilities would hardly have qualified them for parish-officers.

In no part of administration did his Lordship's opinion of his policy go higher than in negotiating annual loans with the city; and yet he was constantly a dupe to his own cunning. Instead of that open, manly, and upright conduct, which

D

would

would always have procured him better terms, his sole intention was evidently that of a subtle courtier endeavouring to over-reach an honest citizen. The citizens of our times were always an over-match for his Lordship, who, by procrastinating the business to the last moment, never failed to make a bad bargain.

This conductor of the American war hath been often censured for making no alliances with foreign powers. The cause is evident. His politics went no farther than the House of Commons and 'Change Alley.

Alley. Raising the supplies, and securing a majority, were the prime objects of his attention. Indeed some overtures were made to more than one foreign potentate; but the plans were projected on so narrow a basis, and the whole business conducted so ignorantly and awkwardly, that they produced nothing but contempt.

In every treaty of friendship and alliance between princes, reciprocal advantage should be, not only the apparent, but the real foundation; because princes hold themselves no

longer bound by treaties than whilst they are beneficial. A treaty obtained by fraud and artifice is much worse than no treaty at all; because it makes an enemy of a friend. A plenipotentiary, employed in negotiations of importance, should doubtless possess abilities, sagacity, and political information; but the virtue and integrity of his character, in gaining the confidence of those with whom he has to treat, will be infinitely more serviceable to his country. This maxim is equally applicable to the king and minister by whom he is sent.

A king

A king who is his own minister, or a minister who governs a kingdom, will find that the policy of Machiavel is applicable only to usurpation and tyranny ; that his influence with foreign princes will depend more upon his probity than his power. An artful, powerful sovereign is an object of terror : little princes dread his alliance, and greater potentates despise it.

The king of Navarre (afterwards Henry IV. of France) besieging Fontenay, in Poitou, undermined the town, so as at last to carry on

a subterraneous conversation with the garrison. Terms were verbally proposed by the King and accepted by the besieged, with this declaration, "that knowing his majesty had never broken his word, they required no other security for the performance of the articles of capitulation." Henry, charmed with the proof of their confidence, not only fulfilled his engagement, but carefully secured the inhabitants from insult, and suffered the garrison to march out, drums beating, and colours flying. This trifling anecdote affords a pleasing example

of the advantage of a virtuous character and a generous confidence. If our revolted colonies could have placed any confidence in the British ministry, a dreadful effusion of blood and treasure would have been spared, the colonies would have continued colonies, and the people of America much happier than they now are, or ever will be.

CHAPTER III.

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT—LORD LYT-
TELTON—CUNNING AND HYPOCRI-
SY—PEDAGOGUE OF FALERII—PYR-
RHUS—ATHENIANS—PUBLIC VIR-
TUE—AVARICE—EARL OF CHATHAM
—PERICLES—PAULUS ÆMILIUS—
SULLY—EARL OF PORTLAND—WO-
MEN, WINE, CARDS AND DICE.

I Have said, at the conclusion of
the preceding chapter, that
the people of America, in their co-
lonial dependency on Britain, were
happier than they now are, or ever
will be. The subject is extraneous
to

to my design: nevertheless, before I resume my subject, I will take the liberty to give my reasons for this opinion.—As to their present felicity, there is no need of argument; their dissatisfaction decides the question: and with regard to their future prospect of happiness, comparative happiness I mean, it must be estimated from the tendency to produce it in the form of government they have chosen.

If public felicity consist in civil liberty, the form of government, by which that liberty is most effectually

actually secured, is the best. What
 is that form of government? In
 our investigation of this problem,
 theory is out of the question: history
 and the experience of modern times
 afford us more substantial argu-
 ments. The various forms of go-
 vernment, which human wisdom or
 folly hath hitherto invented, are
 monarchical, aristocratical or de-
 mocratical, either distinct or mixed.
 The experience of many ages hath
 convinced mankind, that any one
 of the three, when absolute, is in-
 compatible with civil liberty, and
 that the security of the subject is
 in

in exact proportion to the mixture and equipoize of these three powers. This axiom is indisputably proved by the example of the British constitution. Life, liberty, and property, is no where secure except in the British dominions. In all the republics, now existing, liberty is but a name: the people are ruled with a rod of iron, and liable to be tortured for crimes which they never committed.

The United States of America is a huge body without a head. The most salutary institutions that human wisdom

wisdom can devise, will never compensate for the want of that regal prerogative, so necessary to wholesome legislation. We, the subjects of Britain, are convinced by experience, by our feelings, and by comparing our situation with that of every other nation, ancient and modern, that civil liberty can never exist in any other form of government than that in which the three species above-mentioned are equally blended and united; and whilst we wonder at the stupidity of those who laid the foundation of government in other parts of the globe, we naturally

naturally ascribe our own singular felicity to the superior wisdom of our ancestors. In this conclusion we give them more credit than they deserve.

Lord Lyttelton, speaking of the origin of our constitution, says—
 “ Thus, without any settled design,
 “ or speculative skill, this constitution, in a manner, formed itself;
 “ and it was the better for that
 “ reason, as there was more of nature in it and less of political
 “ mystery, which, whenever it prevails, is the bane of public good.”

In

In a constitution thus formed, he adds—"The people could never
 " be brought to understand, that
 " there was such a thing as reason
 " of state distinct from the common
 " reason of mankind; much less
 " would they allow pernicious
 " measures to pass unquestioned or
 " unpunished, under the ridiculous
 " sanction of that name."—This
 quotation naturally recalls me from
 my digression, and brings me back
 to the doctrine which I have un-
 dertaken to support, and which is
 thus elegantly expressed by Cicero—
Aliud utile intendum, aliud honestum
videri

videri solet : falso ; nam eadem utilitatis, quæ honestatis, est regula.

Sully, speaking of that subtle politician Catherine de Medicis, and her son Henry III. of France, writes thus—" To this fault of irresolution, the king, or rather the queen-mother, added another more pernicious ; I mean, an affected dissimulation, a studied hypocrisy and deceit, which she conceived to be the soul of political wisdom."—Contrasting the character of Henry IV. with that of the Count de Soissons, he says—
 " The

“ The king was open, frank, and
 “ generous ; the Count, to a mind
 “ naturally reserved and cautious
 “ without prescience, added an
 “ affected moderation and despi-
 “ cable cunning.”—Relating his
 interview with Seguier, he speaks
 of him thus : “ Having freely
 “ disclosed my most inmost thoughts
 “ to this great magistrate, whom I
 “ knew to be an excellent politician
 “ and an honest man,” &c.

What do we learn from these
 quotations ? We learn, that Sully,
 the wisest of all statesmen, held
 those

those political *essentials*, cunning and hypocrisy, in the utmost contempt; and that he thought honesty and sound policy might unite in the same character.

Whilst Camillus the Roman general was besieging Falerii, the pedagogue, who was entrusted with the education of the sons of the principal inhabitants, conceived a design of betraying the city by delivering up their children to the enemy. The Roman army being at some distance from the walls, he conducted his scholars through the

E gates,

gates, under a pretence of giving them exercise, and decoying them to the Roman camp delivered them to Camillus. That general was so shocked and incensed at the fellow's perfidy, that he ordered the lictors to strip him naked, to furnish the lads with rods, and bade them flog him back to the city. The Falerians were so overcome by this act of generosity, that they immediately surrendered, not to Roman *arms*, but to Roman *virtue*. In this instance, virtue was to the Romans a better weapon than the sword, and to the vanquished, a better security

urity than any capitulation they could have made.

In the war between Pyrrhus and the Romans, a deserter from the army of the former came privately to Fabricius, and offered for a reward to return and poison the king. Now though this would have been equivalent to a victory, the Roman general disdained the offer and sent the traitor back to Pyrrhus; *idque factum ejus*, says Cicero, *a senatu laudatum est*. Themistocles, after his victory over the Persians at Salamis, told the Athenians, that he

had conceived a project that would infallibly secure to them the sovereignty of Greece : but they were informed by Aristides, who was privy to the design, that the project was indeed the most advantageous that could possibly be imagined, but at the same time the most unjust. The Athenians, without hesitation, ordered him to think no more of it.

“ For my part (says Plutarch in
 “ the introduction to the life of
 “ Paulus Æmilius) I fill my soul
 “ with the sublime idea of the
 “ greatest

“greatest and best men, by my
 “attention to history; and, by
 “contemplating such examples, I
 “endeavour to efface the evil im-
 “pressions which those, with whom
 “I am frequently obliged to con-
 “verse, might leave upon my
 “mind.”—If examples of deter-
 mined virtue be as rare in modern
 times as in the days of Plutarch,
 it is equally necessary for us to have
 recourse to history, lest we should
 imagine that public virtue never ex-
 isted but in theory.

What is public virtue ? Public virtue, in the extreme, is the virtue of a Curtius, a Regulus, a Leonidas. The public virtue of modern times does not require so much enthusiasm. No higher degree of patriotism is now expected from a minister of state, than that he should prefer the good of the nation to the good of himself ; that, in his public conduct, totally regardless of his own emolument, the real and substantial interest of his country should employ all his faculties. When this is not the case ; when a selfish, an avaricious, or an ambitious

tious

tious man occupies the helm, the enriching or aggrandizing himself, his family, and his parasites, will be the first objects of his attention.

Avarice is a vice so incompatible with a sublime, an heroic character, that I do not recollect a single instance of a truly great man being ever tainted with it. The late Earl of Chatham knew no interest but that of the nation. Thucydides, speaking of Pericles, says, “ money could
 “ not bribe him ; he was so superior
 “ to the desire of wealth ; though
 “ he enriched the state considerably,

“ he added not a single *drachma* to
 “ his own fortune.” Plutarch gives
 the same testimony of Pelopidas*,
 Aristides, Coriolanus, and of many
 other great men. Paulus Æmilius,
 after the conquest of Macedon,
 would not even look upon the gold
 and silver found in the royal pa-
 laces; but ordered it to be imme-
 diately delivered to the quæstors for
 the use of the commonwealth. He
 died poor.

Sully

* Pelopidas refused very rich presents
 from Artaxerxes, to whom he was sent am-
 bassador.

Sully received a present of a rich service of plate from the city of Rouen, which he gave to the king, with these words: "Every man, in a public employment, is precisely in the situation of a judge, in whom it is infamous to receive presents, either as bribes or gratuities." Henry confessed that he was not accustomed to this sort of doctrine; but that, if it could be established in the finances, it would soon enrich both the crown and the state. When the city of Rheims surrendered to the king, Sully refused a present of ten thousand

and crowns. Madam de Rosny, during his absence, received a present of jewels worth eight thousand crowns, from de Tours a contractor, whom she introduced to her husband at his return. He reprimanded her severely, and gave back the jewels. I recollect an example of equal magnanimity in an English minister of state in the reign of William III. The East India Company, apprehensive that parliament would take away their charter, offered the Earl of Portland fifty thousand pounds for his interest and support. He rejected the offer with disdain,

disdain, and told their agent, that if he urged the bribe a second time, he would from that moment give the company all the opposition in his power.

Other examples of statesmen, inattentive to emoluments, might be selected from our own history. I am surprized they are not more numerous, when I consider the birth, the education, the dignity and importance of the employment of a first minister, and that avarice is the meanest of all vices. But avarice is not the only cause of rapacity

pacity in men through whose hands
 the wealth of nations circulates.
 An Alcibiades accumulates only
 with an intention to dissipate. Men
 of pleasure are often mean, unjust,
 dishonest, to obtain the means of
 self gratification. On such men
 there can be no dependence. A
 violent propensity to women, wine,
 cards and dice, are positive
 disqualifications in a minister of
 state ; and it is very remarkable
 that, in these profligate times, the
 people of England should be uni-
 versally of this opinion. Vi-
 cious men are no less sensible of
 the

beauty, dignity, and power of virtue than the virtuous themselves. All ranks of people behold with detestation the deformity of vice in a conspicuous character. They despise the elocution and the levity of men devoid of principle, and they seem determined to depend for salvation on that virtuous uniformity of character from which alone it can rationally be expected. Not only the informed part of the nation, but persons of every description, now feel the fatal consequence of committing their reputation,

tation, their property, their natural lives, together with the life of the community, to a rapacious, irresolute, unprincipled administration; and they naturally look up for deliverance to the son of that virtuous statesman, since whose administration they have beheld their unfortunate country gradually declining, from the summit of national prosperity, to a state of extreme humiliation. I mean not to rob that noble earl of a single ray of his glory; but I will affirm, that his political abilities would have

have availed him little, without that resolution, firmness and integrity which were the great ornaments of his character.

C H A P.

CHAPTER IV.

VIRTUE—DOSON—PROCRASTINATION
—MINISTERIAL MAJORITY—RE-
FORMATION—REPRESENTATION—
BRIBERY—MURDER—ROBBERY—
A PATRIOT-KING—PLACEMEN AND
PENSIONERS.

VIRTUS, in the language of the Romans, meant courage, patriotism, morality. In the same extensive meaning of the word, I comprehend the virtue of a prime minister, in a mixed government; a government founded on principles of universal justice

and equity. All governments which are either absolutely monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical, are fundamentally unjust, and therefore cannot be supported without a frequent deviation from strict virtue. Machiavillian politics are inapplicable to the British constitution.

The subordinate transactions of a prime minister, are, in a certain degree, influenced by the great outline of his political conduct. If he adopt the wise policy of being inflexibly just to his king, his coun-

F try,

try, and to foreign states, an habitual uniformity of character will descend to his transactions with every individual, He will consider a promise to the most inconsiderable of his dependents as an inviolable obligation. He will disdain the infamous policy of strengthening his party by multiplying the expectation of favours which he never intends to bestow. He will feel the cruelty of equivocal delusion to those who solicit his patronage. Sensible of the torture of suspense, he will give a speedy and a positive answer to every decent solicitation.

Such

Such conduct will save him much trouble and much time; a saving of no small importance to a prime minister.

Antigonus was, in derision, surnamed *Dofon*, from his custom of promising future favours. We have seen a late minister who might with equal propriety have been so denominated. He was incapable of immediate determination in his most trivial concerns. Procrastination pervaded every department of the state. This vice, if he had possessed the political abilities of a Sully

or a Themistocles, were alone sufficient to blast his administration.

This want of resolution, this habit of postponing trivial concerns, betrays a want of that intuitive discrimination and judgement so essentially necessary to the character of a great statesman: nevertheless, it must be acknowledged, that habitual precipitation will be equally ruinous to the state.

In medio tutissimus ibis.

Objects

Objects may require deliberation from their importance, or from their intricacy. In the first case a wise minister will consult his pillow; in the latter, he will commit the examination to persons of experience, penetration, and integrity, with positive orders to bring the matter to a speedy determination. Principle, system, and method, are the three great hinges of political rectitude.

“ The only sure prospect of deliverance from the evils of life
 “ will be seen, when the supreme
 F 3 “ power

“ power shall be vested in a philo-
“ sophic prince, or minister, who
“ shall render virtue triumphant
“ over vice.” These are the words
of Plato. Doubtless, the felicity of
the people is the sole object of every
political institution, and that felicity
is incompatible with vice is self-evi-
dent; but to what degree the man-
ners of the people may be in-
fluenced by the virtue of the prince,
or minister, may admit of some
doubt, in respect to private virtue;
applied to public virtue, however,
the observation is certainly just, the
want of which is so amply sufficient

to

to account for that weight of calamity which hath depressed this nation almost beyond the hope of recovery.

The right of advising the executive branch of government, exercised by the House of Commons, may be strictly constitutional; but the moment that House proceeds to dictate, legislative and executive power are inextricably confounded: the latter is no longer responsible to the former, and the constitution is effectually destroyed. Bad ministers have always endeavoured to produce this confusion. They screen

selves from impeachment by making the Commons accomplices in their guilt. Bad ministers therefore endeavour to persuade the nation, that without a ministerial majority, the wheels of government must unavoidably stand still; and the supposed necessity of the measure is admitted as an excuse for the usual means employed to gain this majority.

A late minister speaking in the House of Commons, against the idea of parliamentary reformation, had the audacity to say, that undue
influence

influence and corruption were indeed great evils ; but they were natural and unavoidable. He deplored them as misfortunes and calamities ; but they could not be prevented, any more than convulsions and earthquakes.—In other words, “ Gentlemen of the House of Commons, you are such a pack of venal wretches, that, without a bribed majority, no minister can possibly conduct the business of the state.” If this idea of a British House of Commons be just, it is impossible to imagine a more infamous assembly : the people of
 England

England might with more security be represented by the dregs of the community.

The spirit of our constitution supposes three distinct branches of government, totally independent of and uninfluenced by each other. A House of Commons elected by the Lords, and influenced by the minister, is a monster unknown to the constitution, and disclaimed by the honest part of the nation. The expectation that such a House of Commons will reform itself is absurd; nor is it at all more rational
to

to expect that reformation will originate in the people : it must therefore necessarily begin with the minister.

Every member of Parliament who accepts a place or pension, *ipso facto*, betrays his constituents. The ceremony of re-election is a mere farce. He knows, that by implication, he is a slave to the minister, because dismissal will be the consequence of his disobedience. He is re-elected, not by his nominal constituents, but by his elector, the peer who owns the borough.

Every

Every individual member of the House of Commons virtually represents every individual member of the community; he is therefore accountable to the whole nation. Now it is the desire, the expectation, of the people of England, that their representatives should be uninfluenced and perfectly free to speak and vote on every question with honour and integrity according to his judgement. Is a place-man or a pensioner, unbiaſſed, uninfluenced? Certainly no. He deceives his constituents: he is a traitor to his country.

This,

This, I confess, is harsh language: nevertheless it is indisputably true. A breach of trust, in a matter of general importance, is a crime of magnitude. A breach of trust to an individual is highly criminal. A breach of trust to millions of individuals is millions of times more criminal, the degree of criminality being as the magnitude of the treason multiplied by the number of persons betrayed. Now the number of persons betrayed by every member of parliament under ministerial influence, is infinite: it is not confined to the few
millions

millions of British subjects of the present generation; it extends to generation upon generation *ad infinitum*. I repeat it—it cannot be too often remembered—Members of Parliament are the delegates, not only of their immediate constituents, but of every man, woman, and child, in the British empire, and of their posterity to the end of time.

This then being the real state of every dependent member of the House of Commons, what must be the situation of the minister by whom they are seduced? It will,
I pre-

I presume, be granted, that the devil, in seducing the mother of mankind, was, at least, as criminal as poor Eve. The minister who bribes a member of parliament with a place, a pension, or a promise, doubtless shares his guilt: therefore the magnitude of the minister's crime, who bribes a majority, is as the guilt of an individual multiplied by the number of members seduced. Just God! That human nature could ever produce a being so daring as to accumulate a weight of guilt so inconceivably enormous! How inconsiderable was the crime of yon
poor

poor wretch, suspended by the neck for taking sixpence from a travelling jew ; or even of that villain condemned for the murder of one man, when compared with the minister, who, by means of a bribed majority, robbed and murdered thousands ; murdered thousands of Americans, Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, Hessians, Brunswickers, and other poor Germans whose appellation I have forgotten ?

So much for murder : as to the robbery committed by the author,

or authors, advisers and supporters of the war, it extends to every individual in the king's dominions, and to their posterity for ever. Is there a heart so hardened in the fire of iniquity, as not to shudder at the reflection?

This sort of reasoning is, I confess, most uncourtly; but it is so plain, so entirely destitute of sophistry, as to bid defiance to logical subtlety, fair argument, wit, and ridicule. It is not in the power of man, or devil, to prevent or invalidate the following conclusions,

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viz.

viz. that a bribing minister and a bribed member of Parliament are the most wicked of human beings; that this sort of diabolical policy hath ever been productive of fatal consequences to this nation, and that the plea of necessity is weak and futile below contradiction.

That a weak and wicked minister cannot proceed in the business of the nation without the support of a bribed majority, I readily grant: I also acknowledge, that a wise and virtuous minister may be thwarted in his most rational and salutary designs,

signs, by members who purchased their seats with the sole intention of selling their votes for a place or a pension; but take away the temptation, and these intentional traitors will speak and vote like honest men. Human nature is rarely so diabolical as to prefer vice to virtue, wrong to right, falsehood to truth, without some prospect of advantage. If a Phoenix of a minister should appear, who, nobly disdaining the wretched policy of his predecessors in office, should firmly resolve to revive the spirit of the constitution, to bribe no member by place or

pension, can there be a doubt, that a virtuous parliament would necessarily be the result ?

Some readers will refuse their assent to the above conclusion : they will tell me that such a resolution, instead of reforming parliament, would oust the minister ; that a venal majority would unite their efforts to get rid of him, in hopes of a less virtuous successor. This argument, founded on the knowledge of mankind, is very fair and very plausible ; and as it would be imprudent to leave behind me a
strong

strong post in possession of the enemy, I shall endeavour to destroy it before I proceed.

First, I must take for granted that the minister is steadily and resolutely supported by a patriot-king; for, without this supposition, the virtue of the minister will avail him nothing. Let it also be remembered, that, in consequence of the liberty of the press, the people at large are minutely acquainted with the political conduct of each individual representative in parliament. Now the people without doors not

only judge as rationally concerning the true interest of the nation as the members within, but they very clearly perceive the motive of those members who speak and vote in opposition to that true interest.

Let us now suppose a virtuous minister, supported by a patriotizing, uniformly opposed and thwarted by a venal majority. His most salutary and beneficial motions are negatived; he constantly divides in a disgraceful minority. What is to be done?—Let him appeal to the people by an immediate dissolution of

of parliament, and let this expedient be repeated, until they are taught to elect such representatives as the spirit of the constitution requires. There are many infamous individuals in the community; wretches that will sell their country, their wives, their children, themselves, and their posterity, for the paltry gratuity of a few guineas once in seven years. But there is a very decisive majority of people in this kingdom, who will support a patriot-king and an honest minister, against any cabal of venal miscreants assembled in parliament. How

highly soever those mighty representatives of the people, who are placed or pensioned by the minister, may stand in their own estimation, they may rest assured, that the respectable part of the community look down upon them with contempt; that the foolish assertion, that a place or a pension is not an absolute bribe, is heard by the people with the indignation that such nonsense deserves; and that place-men and pensioners in parliament are universally considered as the most profligate and despicable part of the community.

That

That every member of parliament who accepts of any emolument, or promise, from government, is, *a priori*, a traitor to his country, admits of no dispute; but, if facts are necessary to convince the reader, let him remember the American war, begun and continued by a black list of ministerial hirelings, fools bribed to betray themselves.

The noble lord who had the resolution to assert in the House of Commons, that bribery is a necessary, an indispensable evil, should have adduced at least one example
from

from his own success, of bad means producing good effects. But unfortunately for this noble lord, and his diabolical doctrine, the result of his own conduct gives him the lie direct. Could any other political system, though invented by Satan himself, have dragged this nation so precipitately to the brink of destruction?

Our mixt monarchy is universally acknowledged to be the most perfect form of government that human wisdom hath hitherto been able to invent. But this perfect system, if
we

we credit modern politicians, cannot be supported, without bribing the delegates of the people to obey the mandates of the minister : that is to say, without universal corruption ; in short, without the constant assistance of the devil. Doubtless there is some fallacy in this business. Either our constitution is a bad one, or we strangely mistake the coincident mode of administration ; for no axiom is more indisputably true, than that virtue wants no assistance from vice.

Every

Every attempt, as I have before observed, to induce a venal parliament to reform itself, either by means of a more equal representation, or by any other means that the most sagacious minister can devise, will always prove abortive; but I am positive, very positive, that it is in the power of a virtuous minister, supported by a patriot-king, to bring about a reformation adequate to every purpose of a government, wise, salutary, and effectual.

There

There is another foolish and false political axiom, frequently repeated as one of the wise sayings of Sir Robert Walpole, namely, that when the minister's majority in parliament dwindles to sixty, it is high time for him to retire. The belief of this axiom, though evidently ridiculous, is of pernicious consequence : first, because it may induce the king to abandon a good minister ; and secondly, because the opposition is stimulated, by this belief, to the utmost exertion of their oratorical faculties, on every question right or wrong, in the persuasion,

persuasion, that to carry a point against the minister, or reduce him to an inconsiderable majority, effects his ruin. Experience hath sufficiently evinced the fallacy of this conclusion.

Notwithstanding the notorious bribery at elections, and the no less flagrant *virtue* of the Commons, we are not yet arrived at that extreme degree of corruption, which immediately precedes the final destruction of great empires. Our army and our courts of justice are yet uncontaminated. I say *yet* uncontaminated;

†

but

but if we may judge from the example of former empires, unless we determine to eradicate this partial venality, it will certainly become universal. Plutarch, speaking of Coriolanus canvassing for the consulship, tells us, that it was not from any suspicion of bribery that the candidates were required to appear ungirt and without a close garment during the canvas; for it was much later that money became the means of gaining an election: “ then corruption (says this writer) reaching also the tribunals and the camps, arms were subdued by
“ money,

“ money, and the commonwealth
“ was changed into a monarchy.
“ The man who first ruined the
“ Roman people, was he who first
“ gave them treats and gratuities.”

CHAPTER V.

FUNDING—BALANCE OF POWER—
FLEET—FORTIFICATIONS—ARMY—
MILITIA—ATHENS.

IF I have not strangely deceived myself, I have, in the preceding chapters, proved, by authentic examples, and fair argument, that Machiavillian policy is as foolish as it is wicked; and that virtue is as essential to the prosperity of a nation, as it is to the felicity of every individual.

dual. This maxim admits of no exception.

*Nihil nec expedire nec utile quod sit
injustum.*

No public measure can be expedient that is not just. The prime minister of a great nation, acting without a fixed principle, is like a mariner in the boisterous Atlantic ocean without a compass. That principle is *inflexible integrity*: it will render every dilemma a plain case, and will relieve him from the perplexity of perpetual doubt. Let us now apply this
general

general rule to the abstruse science
of *finance*.

Some political scribblers in France and elsewhere have highly extolled our wonderful sagacity in the invention of funding; that is, of borrowing money on the credit of posterity; contracting debts to be discharged by future generations. This, according to the maxim which I wish to establish, is bad policy, because it is unjust, illegal, dishonest in the extreme. Public inheritance is necessarily intailed and cannot be alienated or mortgaged

without a flagrant breach of that universal law which is founded in equity.

“ A wise and good king (says
 “ the great Sully) ought, it is true,
 “ to study perpetually the good of
 “ his subjects; but he never for-
 “ gets that permanent good must
 “ not be sacrificed to a present tran-
 “ sitory advantage: he is not less
 “ the father of subjects yet unborn,
 “ than of those of his own times.”

Is it possible to imagine a more dishonest character than that of an
 extravagant

extravagant father burthening his estate with a debt that must involve his family in ruin? The minister, who, in this kingdom, first adopted this fatal mode of anticipation, urged the wretched plea of expediency: parliament was partly bribed and partly cajoled, by the facility of raising the supplies, and the people acquiesced because the taxes necessary to pay the interest were much less than if the sum required had been raised within the year.

It was very easy to foresee the consequences of this expediency; but

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we,

we, who feel these consequences, are possessed of better arguments against such policy, than any reasoning *a priori* could have produced. We are now convinced, by the history of Europe, that *the balance of power* was an idle phantom, conjured up to rob us of our treasure ; that we had no business with continental wars, and that we were perpetually dupes of continental politicians. The greatest misfortune to a young spendthrift, is the facility of borrowing ; and his worst enemy is the *friend* that supplies his present wants. If the merchants, jews,
and

and bankers of the city of London, who first lent money to the minister, had been cast into the sea with mill-stones round their necks, it would have been a happy circumstance for this kingdom. Fatal experience hath, at last, convinced us, that we have incurred the enormous debt of more than 200,000,000 of pounds, without necessity or advantage; and, such hath been the absurdity of our conduct, that the last hundred millions hath been expended *in purchasing the loss of America.* The poor Americans have lost, completely lost that liber-

ty for which they thought they were contending; they have wantonly exchanged the best for the worst of all possible forms of government, and we the inhabitants of the mother country, smart severely for the folly and wickedness of a detestable administration.

Whence this accumulation of evil? The answer is too obvious to require a moment's hesitation. The facility of borrowing; that destructive, that detestable system of funding; the avarice of money-lenders; unjust ministers: these, these are the

the causes of our present difficult situation. If the successive prime ministers of this country, since the Revolution, had been men of such integrity as to have adopted no expediency incompatible with strict justice to posterity, they would have contracted no debts which they were unable to discharge; they would have proportioned their expences to the annual revenue of the nation; they would necessarily have avoided continental wars, disgraceful subsidies, and unconstitutional standing armies; recollecting the peculiar advantage of an insular situation,

the

the fleet would have engaged their whole attention, and so situated, and so defended, Britain would have bid defiance to the world in arms.

Surely there is no deception, nothing chimerical in the above supposition. I despise every attempt at sophistical argumentation. The facts are indisputable and the reasoning comprehensible by the meanest capacity. Is there a reader of common understanding, who does not perceive that all our disasters, disappointments, defeats, losses, debts, and taxes, are justly ascribed
to

to lenders and borrowers of money ;
to illocal politics ; to unjust ministers ?

Possibly, necessity may effect, what reason and justice could not accomplish. Probably the period is not far distant, when we shall clearly comprehend that our fleet is our sole object of defence ; that a superior fleet is a sufficient security against every possible insult, and consequently that both regulars and militia are useless burdens, except what is necessary to preserve internal security.

As

As for fortifications, their inutility in this island is so self-evident, that I am ashamed to attack them. The idea of fortifying towns originated in pusillanimity; in times, when the heroes of a romantic age were afraid to meet their enemies in the field, unless covered from head to foot in impenetrable steel. Fortifications are a misfortune to every country where they are found, and on this island they are eminently ridiculous. Good God! Is it possible to imagine any human being so weak as to suppose Portsmouth in danger, with a superior fleet at Spit-head?

head? England was never more respected and feared than during the interregnum. Why?—She was particularly attentive to her fleet. Fortifications, for the defence of an island, are of no use, unless every accessible part be equally strong. Nothing less than a regular chain of forts, encircling the entire kingdom, will render this mode of defence of any service. Extensive fortifications require numerous garrisons, contrary to the spirit of our constitution. But, say the riders of this new hobby-horse, our naval stores and docks must be defended against a *coup de main*.

main. I profess the utmost veneration for the zeal of genuine patriotism. I acknowledge the importance of our dock-yards; but the idea of their being in any danger is founded on a supposition of our naval inferiority; that supposition is unmanly, impolitic, disgraceful, absurd. A wise administration will never forget, that our navy is the great bulwark of the nation; that every other expence should yield to this important concern; that a superior fleet disdains all protection from forts and armies, and that Britain ceases to be a nation, the
moment

moment she depends on any other defence.

These are not times for expensive projects, except where the utility and necessity of the measure are indisputable. Extensive fortifications are things of such magnitude as to admit of no estimate. A desultory calculation is all that can be expected, and its several parts are so connected and intermixed, that it can neither be measured nor valued after it is finished. Erecting fortifications, therefore, is a most desirable employment for that species of honesty

neſty which deems it no crime to defraud the public. In this inſtance, ſuſpicion is a virtue. On this ſubject a wiſe miniſter will liſten to every propoſal with great caution; he will remember, that though the principal may be a perſonage of good underſtanding and of acknowledged integrity, the engineers by whom he is adviſed are under the ſtrongeſt temptation, right or wrong, to promote a deſign in which their own intereſt is ſo largely concerned.

The

The time will come, when Britain, perfectly comprehending the natural advantages of her insular situation, will erase every fortification or fort, except those that may be necessary to afford an asylum to a few invalids: she will discover, that a numerous land army, whether regulars or militia, is a useless expence, and that her fleet is her sole and sufficient defence against every possible insult.

That a writer, professedly sup-
porting the constitution, should con-
demn a constitutional militia as a
useless

useless burden to the nation, may cause surprize; but the popularity of a measure is no proof of its propriety. In time of peace, the militia is of no use, because it has no real existence. In time of war, it can only be useful on a supposition, that the regulars are transported to the continent (which I trust in God will never happen in future!) or that our fleet is inferior to that of the enemy which under a wise administration can never be supposed. Regular troops, to a certain extent, are necessary to support the dignity of the crown, to enforce the execu-

tion of the laws, and preserve internal tranquillity. These, and these only are the uses of a standing army in this kingdom.

If the minister at the commencement of the dispute with America, instead of calling out the militia, and augmenting the army, had exerted the entire strength of the nation in the equipment of a formidable fleet, no proposition in Euclid is more convincingly demonstrable, than that a hundred millions of pounds sterling, and thirteen American provinces, would have been saved to

this nation. This last fatal example hath, I believe, convinced us that the sea is our natural element, as it was that of the Athenians.

After the battle of Marathon, the Greeks were of opinion, that they had nothing to fear from the Persians; but Themistocles, foreseeing that Darius would probably attack them by sea, persuaded the Athenians to appropriate the revenues of their silver mines at Laurium to the building of ships. A hundred galleys were accordingly equipped. He convinced his countrymen,

trymen, that though they were not able to contend with their enemies by land, yet with a naval force they would not only repel the barbarians, but keep all Greece in subjection. To this advice Greece was indebted for her salvation, and Athens for her resurrection. After his defeat in the straits of Salamis, Xerxes was never able to face the Athenians, though his army remained entire. Themistocles was doubtless an able politician. Pericles also perfectly understood the utility and importance of a powerful navy. The conduct of these two Grecians merits the attention of a British minister.

CHAPTER VI.

EXPEDIENTS—TAXES—LUXURY—NE-
CESSARIES—SUPERFLUITIES—CA-
PRICE—FASHION—VICE AND
FOLLY.

“ IT is a singular felicity (says
“ the incomparable Sully) to
“ commence prime minister, when
“ things are in a prosperous train.
“ That felicity I never enjoyed.
“ The finances of France were an
“ ocean without shore or bottom.”

In this predicament stood the pre-
sent prime minister of this kingdom.

Virtue

Virtue was Sully's compass and resolution his pilot. The great projects conceived by the king of France obliged the minister to augment the revenue considerably; who unwilling to increase the taxes proposed the following expedients :

1st. To examine the accounts of the late farmers of the revenue, and oblige them to refund.

2d. To audit the accounts of the receiver-general of the clergy.

3d. To appoint a chamber of justice to examine the accounts of former treasurers, &c.

4th. To enquire into the equivalents paid for the alienation of crown lands.

5th. Sums paid for the purchase of employments.

6th. To obtain acquittals from the Swiss cantons, by the offer of a certain sum of ready cash.

7th. To alienate small unprofitable claims of the crown, and to redeem several mortgages of the revenue with the produce.

8th. To resume the grants on the revenue.

9th.

9th. To unite the ocean with the Mediterranean, by means of navigable canals.

These expedients, though not directly applicable to this country and to the present times, are nevertheless not undeserving the consideration of a British minister. Enormous fortunes unjustly acquired, whether obtained at home, or in the East or in the West, by ministers, by secretaries, by commanders, contractors or commissaries, during the last war, should by the legislature be restored to the public; and every
member

member of either house, who supported the mad minister, should be trebly taxed, until the hundred millions by them accumulated be discharged. For an obvious reason, this last expedient is impracticable; yet who will say that it were unjust? The entire fortunes of those miscreants who abetted, aided, and assisted the minister in heaping coals of fire on the head of every individual member of the community, were a contemptible satisfaction for the innumerable murders and progressive robberies they have committed.

Heavy

Heavy taxes, to men in affluence, are a blessing : they affect only the superfluous part of their income, and serve to moderate that full tide of gratification which never fails to produce lothing, disease, and death. To men of small fortunes, extreme taxation on what in former times were deemed luxuries, but which from habit are become necessaries, is a real, a perpetual grievance, as it obliges them to abridge, or totally relinquish, the little indulgences which constituted no inconsiderable part of their felicity. But to persons in indigent circumstances, extreme taxation

taxation on the necessaries of life, deprives them not only of every comfort, but reduces the very means of existence to a scanty pittance. What must be the feelings, the execrations, of this most useful, most numerous class of men, when they remember, that their sufferings were occasioned by a venal majority of nominal representatives, who sold their bodies to the minister and their souls to the devil for places and pensions !

Let me not be accused of indecent asperity. No language on this

this subject can be too severe;
nor any retribution satisfactory,
without a just determination of these
delinquents to alieviate the burthen
of the people by carrying it on their
own shoulders.

“ From the enmity I have shewn
“ to luxury (says Sully, whom I
“ always read with advantage, and
“ quote with pleasure) it will be
“ supposed that every article of
“ superfluous expence was heavily
“ taxed: so it was; and I honestly
“ declare, that with many other
“ superfluities which I thought in-
“ consistent

“ consistent with the exigencies of
 “ the state, if my power had been
 “ sufficient, I would have made
 “ the gentry of France pay very
 “ dear for the luxury of lolling in
 “ coaches.”

Taxation is the most irksome
 branch of a minister's occupation.
 A multiplicity of irrational hints,
 plans, proposals, and advisers, serve
 only to disturb and perplex him.
 Taxation, in this kingdom, is
 become a very extensive and
 complicated branch of legisla-
 tion. Hitherto, it appears a maze
 without

without a plan; sketched and executed at random, void of regularity, design, or principle: nevertheless I am persuaded that taxation may be reduced to system without any great exertion of mental abilities. Every rational system must be founded on certain fixed principles. The principles on which I have established my new political system, are *truth* and *justice*. Let us now try whether these be applicable to taxation.

All taxes are imposed by the great and opulent, without the consent,

sent, approbation, or interference of a very great majority of the community; and the necessity for extreme taxation originated in the misconduct of the great and opulent: justice therefore declares, that these authors of oppression should sustain the entire burthen.

Here, impossibility stares us in the face. The corruption and folly of the great and opulent have loaded their country with so enormous a debt, that the entire produce of all their estates were insufficient to pay the interest. How
then

then shall justice be satisfied? Severe justice cries, *Sell their estates, and turn the great and opulent adrift*—"Forgive us our trespasses, " as we forgive them that trespass " against us."—This part of the divine prayer pleads powerfully in mitigation of their sentence. But, though Justice may be persuaded to relax a little, in compassion to human frailty, she will not suffer innocence to be more oppressed than absolute necessity requires. The great offenders, the dependent majority in both houses, cannot, without assistance, pay the interest of the debt

K

which

which themselves have contracted; the interest must be discharged; the innocent members of the community therefore are obliged to contribute a part; but justice requires that *that* part, though a very considerable over-proportion, should be as small as can possibly be contrived, and particularly that the ministerial dignitaries of the church should be taxed to the utmost extent of severity. I wish, for the sake of religion, I could bury in oblivion the servility of that reverend bench, without whose assistance the most inhuman and destructive measures of

a weak

a weak and wicked administration
could not have been executed !

The exigencies of the state, we are told, require that the chief burthen of taxation should be laid on the necessaries of life, because they are most certainly productive ; but experience, and a better knowledge of mankind, informs us, that this axiom is not true. Among the most indigent class of mortals, thousands of individuals may be found, who frequently deprive themselves of a pennyworth of bread for the sake of a dram of gin or a pennyworth

of snuff. The wife of a poor mechanic will go without dinner for the sake of a dish of tea at White-Conduit-house. A fine lady will sacrifice every domestic comfort to gorgeous apparel and a splendid equipage. So universal and so despotic is the empire of fashion, vanity, and luxury, that what are called the necessaries of life are secondary considerations.

Some luxuries are properly taxed, but the great weight of taxes rests on articles which too heavily oppress our manufactories. This is unjust,
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and

and will finally prove ruinous ; a consequence naturally resulting from a system of taxation founded on false principles ; a system the most irrational, injudicious, inadequate, impolitic and inequitable, that the united genius of folly and injustice could have invented. I do not arraign the present minister. It is very difficult to add any thing to a monstrous fabric without increasing its deformity. A rational and congruous plan of taxation cannot be executed without a total subversion of the old system. Ximenes relieved the commons of Castile from a

grievous burden, by an alteration in the manner of collecting the taxes.

The proper objects of taxation in every state are avarice, pride, vanity, fashion, folly, caprice, pleasure, indulgence, superfluities, and superabundance. These, in a kingdom abounding with affluent individuals, afford an ample field for taxation; and, where extreme taxation is become unavoidable, until these sources are exhausted, the necessities of life should remain untouched. The idea, that they are

not

not productive, is false. I am very certain that under proper management they would prove more certainly efficient, and much less liable to evasion, than taxes on necessities. If this be doubted, let them be successively tried as superfluous taxes, and remain unappropriated until the product of each be determined: let them then, in succession, supersede the tax on leather, on candles, on soap, and many other old taxes, which were imposed by ministers who in raising money lost sight of every consideration, except that of producing the sum required.

Every unpopular tax is essentially a bad one.

The spirit of our constitution requires, that the people should tax themselves. But the people are not so foolish as to imagine, that, in being taxed by what are called their representatives, they have assented to the taxes imposed. If indeed the people were represented by real delegates, by men of their own choosing, obliging them to pay the taxes imposed by parliament would be no violation of the constitution.

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In the present state of things, every attempt at real representation seems chimerical: but the people may be easily induced to tax themselves, by a judicious taxation of non-essentials; articles of luxury or conveniency, of which those who can afford to purchase them will not be deprived, but which may be dispensed with by the indigent without injury. Articles of taxation within this description are innumerable.

All taxes on raw materials, in a manufacturing country, are wonderfully absurd. Taxes on land or water carriage

carriage are no less preposterous. But one of the most oppressive taxes on manufacturing towns, is that which was designed for their relief, and from which government reaps no advantage. I mean the enormous assessment of two millions *per annum* for the maintenance of the poor; a tax on the industrious for the support of idleness; a mistaken, misapplied charity, which renders every manufacturer a spendthrift. Depending for subsistence on the relief which he has a right to demand from the parish, he is careless of futurity, and never dreams
of

of accumulating the smallest sum for himself or family, in case of sickness, decrepitude, or want of employment. The legislature hath so effectually provided for his necessities, that he thinks it useless to take any care of himself.

To those who have bestowed but a cursory attention on this subject, it must appear very extraordinary, that in our most flourishing manufacturing towns, where the industrious poor are best paid, and most constantly employed, the rates for the support of indigence should be
most

most oppressive. But the enigma is easily solved, when we consider, that the benevolence of the legislature hath made it unnecessary for the poor to provide against future distress.

From the manufacturers of woollen cloth in the west riding of Yorkshire, we learn, that, when corn is cheap, they frequently find a difficulty in executing their orders from abroad; for the spinners, who make it a rule to earn no more money than is sufficient to supply their necessities, will labour four, five, or six days

days in the week, according to the price of provisions.

The manufacturers at Norwich, Leeds, Hallifax, Sheffield, and Manchester, tell us, that their best hands constantly make Monday a holiday, and by those of Birmingham, I am assured, that the generality of their people seldom settle to work until Wednesday morning. Here then is a loss to the nation and to the workmen themselves, of one third of what ought to be the entire produce of their labour. This loss to the nation amounts to
a very

a very large sum. But the loss to each individual workman is proportionably much greater ; for, to the loss of two days wages in every week, we must add the money spent in liquor during these two idle days, which may be fairly estimated at the earnings of one day, at the very least : so that there remains for the support of himself and family exactly one half of what he would earn if he could be satisfied with one day in seven for relaxation and amusement. But this habitual dissipation is productive of a still greater injury to the community ; it impairs
his

his strength, diminishes his years of utility, and brings him prematurely on the parish, without a single farthing in store for the support of his wife and children.

Let us now suppose that every labouring manufacturer, in full employment, were compelled by a general law to leave, in the hands of his employer, the wages of one day in every week, to be appropriated to the maintenance of disabled or superannuated workmen and their families. Let these sums be paid weekly to a receiver-general of
every

every parish. Would there be any thing inequitable or unjust in such a law? Would it not, on the contrary, relieve many of the inhabitants of manufacturing towns from a very heavy and a very inequitable tax? Would it not, by easing these towns of enormous poor-rates, enable them to lower the prices of their goods? and would it not finally prolong the lives of many useful individuals, and render them much more valuable members of society?

Birmingham raises upwards of thirteen thousand pounds *per annum* for

for the maintenance of the poor : a heavy tax on the industrious for the support of improper objects of charity : a weight sufficient to turn the balance in favour of Ireland, where no such tax exists, if that country should ever rise to a competition with Britain in the articles of plating, japanning, &c. This consideration militates equally in favour of the sister kingdom, against Sheffield, Birmingham, Leeds, and other manufacturing towns. In answer to this observation, it will be said, that when the manufactures of Ireland increase, she will find it equally ne-

L cessary

cessary to provide for the poor in a similar way. I am of a different opinion, for the following reasons. When the poor rates were first established in this kingdom, their present incredible extent and oppressive influence were not foreseen. Ireland possesses the great advantage of beholding the fatal consequences of our excessive charity accomplished and realized. She has too much sagacity not to shun this rock.

Superficial readers will accuse me of inconsistency in thus reasoning against a tax for the maintenance
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of the poor, forgetful of what I have before written in opposition to the taxes by which they are oppressed. A moment's reflection will evince the fallacy of this suggestion. The industrious poor cannot be too carefully and indulgently protected and supported by the legislature. The idle and profligate poor are the most worthless and ungrateful part of the creation, and therefore merit no attention: they are a burden to the community, and a disgrace to human nature; yet such are the objects generally relieved by parish officers.

The power of every state depends not on the affluence but on the œconomy of her subjects. The republic of Holland affords a striking example of the truth of this axiom. The surest means of inducing a habit of œconomy, is to tax every object of idle gratification. If this system had been adopted, administration would not have been perplexed with petitions from the trading part of the nation. The real burthen of taxation is to be estimated, not by the sum imposed; but by the articles taxed. If the taxes imposed on this country were judiciously

judiciously transferred from the indigent to the wealthy, from the necessaries to the luxuries of life, the burthen would hardly be felt, and the gratitude of the people, in unison with a patriot-king, would support the minister against every attempt of venality and disappointment.

CHAPTER VII.

SUBSIDIES—CONTINENTAL WARS—
 COLONIZATION—FISHERIES—EAST
 AND WEST INDIES—RELIGION—NA-
 VY—FORTIFICATIONS—COSMO-
 COMMERCE, ARTS AND MANUFAC-
 TURES—AGRICULTURE—TIME.

PUBLIC misfortunes are some-
 times productive of public
 good. Our present incapacity to
 bestow subsidies on foreign princes,
 to engage in continental wars for the
 balance of power, and to extend
 our dominions, may possibly bring
 us to a proper knowledge of our
 true

true interest. Spendthrifts are seldom convinced of the absurdity of their conduct, till necessity produces reflexion. Foreign subsidies and continental wars have cost this nation astonishing sums of money, without adding a jot to our importance or security ; and that we have been no great gainers by colonizing America, will, I presume, hardly be disputed. If we had wisely suffered the heroes on the continent to cut each other's throats, without assistance or molestation, we should never have experienced the fatal necessity of most unjustly contracting

debts to be discharged by posterity, and we might always have maintained a fleet that would have preserved our superiority, on our natural element, incontestible

The vast expence of inhabitants and of treasure that hath been lavished in gaining and losing America, would have peopled and cultivated every acre in this island, so considerable a part of which remains a desert, to the indelible reproach of former ministers. Without America, the revenue arising from moderate taxation would have been
 amply

amply sufficient for the support of government and the protection of the kingdom: The people would have lived in ease and affluence, and the sovereign in splendid tranquillity.

It is difficult, very difficult to reflect with patience on the blessings of which both king and people have been deprived by a succession of weak and wicked ministers; men who, for want of common sense and common honesty, have intailed distress on every individual subject for ages yet to come. It is impossible to
read

read a page of our history, since the Revolution, without indignation.

In defence of colonization, we are told, that a connection and trade with distant colonies is the support of navigation, and a nursery for seamen. With regard to navigation, and the nurture of sailors, the benefit to this nation is the same, whether the countries with which we trade be colonies or independent states. But in defence of our settlement in North America, we are told, that our fishery on the banks
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of Newfoundland breeds an infinite number of sailors for the use of the navy.—Very true ; but a proper attention to the fishery on our own coast would answer that purpose more effectually, and be much more profitable. It is high time our good and faithful friends the Dutch were driven from the coast of Scotland. It seems to have been the peculiar business of our evil genius to divert the attention of successive administrations from our natural advantages, and to send them in search of unprofitable adventures : unprofitable in the best of times ;
but

but which, in our days, have in their consequences proved dreadfully ruinous. Two thirds, at least, of our present national debt, is placed to the account of our American colonies.

As to our West India islands, and our vast possessions in the East, my countrymen are not now in a temper to listen to any argument against their importance to a commercial nation. It were however no difficult task to prove, that our system of trade with the East Indies is founded on false commercial principles ;

ciples; and that our traffic with Asia, Africa, and the West Indies is fundamentally unjust and inhuman admits of no dispute. Can such a system—*ought* such a system to prosper? What is the opinion of the lords spiritual on this subject? Is religion a farce? Is the prospect of Lambeth so infinitely bewitching, as to stifle every principle of Christianity?

Religion out of the question (for it seems to be totally out of the question with all ranks of men) Spain and Portugal are fair examples

ples of the effect of colonization. They possess inexhaustible mines of gold and precious stones; their distant territories are extensive; yet their commerce is inconsiderable; their treasury is not rich, and their subjects are miserably poor. The three most powerful potentates in Europe possess no colonies. Rome fell by the extent of dominion. Had her power been concentrated and confined to Italy, she might not only have bid defiance to every inundation of northern barbarians, but even to time itself.

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In a commercial nation, where the words *debtor* and *creditor* are constantly applied and perfectly understood, the proper method of estimating the value of distant colonies, is to compare the profit with the expence. Now where are the sums to originate sufficient to counterbalance the national debt evidently incurred on account of our East and West India settlements?

War is doubtless the greatest evil with which it hath pleased Providence to afflict mankind. Men are supposed to be rational beings. Ra-
tional

tional beings never act without the expectation of some immediate or ultimate benefit. The beneficial result of war is *peace*; and yet we, on frivolous pretences, break that *peace*, to obtain—what?—*peace*, of which we were already in possession. Good God! what an unaccountable being is man!

Our three last wars with the house of Bourbon began in the colonies. We have now scarce laid down our arms, and we are again quarrelling with the Spaniards about cutting logwood. It will not be very long
before

before we shall dispute about some punctilio with the French in the East Indies. What is the cause of all this inevitable evil? *Colonies; mill-stones* round the neck of this kingdom.

Are then the colonies to be abandoned?—No: they will, like all other colonies, in time drop off by their own weight, and the mother country will recover strength in proportion as the vital fluid, by which they were sustained, re-circulates in her own veins.

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But, since we are so entangled with these colonies as not to be able immediately to shake them off; and since colonies are necessarily productive of war, the greatest of all possible evils, how is the minister to act? How is this evil to be avoided? The answer requires no deliberation. A powerful navy will effectually secure this kingdom from every possible insult. Fortifications, garrisons, militia, and regular troops, are idle and ridiculous expences, except what may be necessary to enforce the laws, and preserve internal tranquillity.

Such

Such should be the creed of a British minister; such the basis of his public conduct. If he be a wise man, regardless of every argument in support of a contrary system, he will fix his attention steadily on the fleet; he will annihilate the inhuman and illegal method of manning the navy; he will render it an eligible service to the lowest sailor, and he will reward the officers by every possible means of distinction.

It is impossible not to entertain a mean opinion of human understanding, when we consider by what

flow degrees nations arrive at common sense. The system I propose is entirely destitute of art or political refinement: It is the language of nature; the simple dictates of the genius of Britain: It is self-evidently just, expedient, and salutary: nevertheless, former administrations have been so bewildered and misguided by state policy, as constantly to mistake the plainest road to national felicity.

In a news-paper of this day, I read, “ *Extract of a letter from Plymouth.* The commissioners for
“ surveying

“ surveying the places appointed
 “ for the new works, are arrived,
 “ viz. Admiral Barrington, Lord
 “ Hood, General Sir David Lind-
 “ say, Sir Charles Grey, K. B.
 “ Commodore Hotham, Sir W.
 “ Howe, K. B. The Duke of
 “ Richmond, Lord George Lenox,
 “ our governor, and Sir Guy
 “ Carleton.” I had much rather
 have heard that they were assembled
 on the downs to play a match at
 cricket, or blindman’s buff. It
 were an employment equally ratio-
 nal, equally beneficial to the nation,
 not quite so expensive, and infinitely

more honest. In times like these, when the nation bends to the earth under the weight of taxation, such expensive absurdities sting me to the heart. Forts and batteries of no more use than if they were to fortify the moon ! I lose all patience when I reflect, that this defensive system originates in fear ; in the dastardly apprehension of an attempt to destroy our dock-yards ; an idea which nothing but a conscious naval inferiority, or absolute cowardice could have inspired. I can dwell no longer on this subject with any degree of good humour : it is below discussion.

Cosmo

Cosmo de Medicis, the first of that name, was the best politician of his time. No man better understood the art of inducing a turbulent people to a voluntary obedience to the laws, which were always the basis of his own conduct. His monument, by the unanimous decree of his fellow citizens, declares him *father of his country*. Popularity was the foundation of his power; commerce the chief object of his attention.

Commerce, in this nation, is an object of considerable magnitude

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and importance; not because it is really our prime object, but because it is the source of most immediate relief. The prime object of an intelligent minister is AGRICULTURE; that real, that inexhaustible fountain of opulence, strength, and felicity to Britain. No incident in the history of nations is more demonstrative of human absurdity, than our constant rage for peopling and cultivating remote countries, whilst the greatest part of our own island remains unpeopled and uncultivated; especially when we consider, that this more profitable plan
of

of improvement, might have been effected without waste of men or money.

Arts, manufactures, and traffic, necessarily produce an influx of gold and silver, by which individuals and the state are apparently enriched. But gold and silver do not constitute the intrinsic energy, the vital principle, the general affluence of a nation. We find among the Dutch many rich individuals, and the revenue of the republic is considerable : nevertheless, the state is neither opulent nor powerful. Rich merchants

chants may be convenient in lending money to an extravagant minister, and in so doing, they act as instruments of destruction; but a rich merchant contributes to the support of government, only in proportion to what is consumed by his family; which, if frugality be his passion, bears no proportion to his wealth. It would have been happy for this nation, if there had never been a merchant or a banker in the city, capable of lending to government a single thousand pounds. Where is the distinction between a banker that feeds the extravagances of a weak
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and wicked administration, and a jew who supplies a spendthrift with the means of his destruction? Does any man hesitate to call the jew a villain? But admitting the increase of wealth by means of trade to be substantially beneficial, the emigrations, loss of subjects by shipwreck, and wars incidental to an extensive colonial system of traffic, sufficiently counterpoise every possible advantage: nevertheless, trade and manufactures must be encouraged and supported; not because they are essential to our felicity and power,

but

but as necessary evils in our present situation.

This nation hath, during the last and present century, drawn as great profits from foreign traffic, as the most sanguine expectation could have imagined ; but when our present consequent debts and taxes are thrown into the opposite scale, who will affirm that we have increased in opulence and power ? Men of landed property will bear ample testimony of the contrary : they are sufficiently convinced that every acre of their land, and every guinea in their pockets,

pockets, hath lost half its former value. Men, women, and children, whose property is in the funds, feel an equal diminution of their fortune. The clergy, the army, and all men in office, whose stipends are fixed, are doubly impoverished, by the increase of those taxes which fall immediately on themselves, and by the general effect of extreme taxation on all the necessaries of life. In short, fifty pounds, fifty years ago, would have purchased as much as double that sum at this time : therefore every individual in the kingdom hath lost half his fortune,
not-

notwithstanding the great influx of gold and silver in return for our manufactures, and of *lacks* from the East Indies, acquired by rapine and murder.

Such have been the effects of colonizing and of commerce to this country; yet such is our present situation, that they cannot be abandoned or neglected without involving ourselves in still greater difficulties. Our manufactures employ a considerable number of subjects, and are productive of large profits to the principals concerned; so far
 5 they

they seem beneficial to the state : nevertheless, if it be true, that most manufactures are extremely injurious to the health of the persons employed ; that, to a very great degree, they increase the number of necessitous poor, and that the traffic, with its consequences, induced by the exportation of these manufactures, hath impoverished the nation ; it will necessarily follow, that our conceptions of extensive commerce and manufactures are founded in error.

Probably,

Probably, a few more capital disasters, and the experience of another century, may convince us, that every project, howsoever immediately beneficial, which tends to depopulation, is ultimately ruinous; that lands are more profitable than looms, mines, and forges; that it were much better to settle our waste lands and to people our own island, than to colonize distant regions in expectation of future fallacious advantages; that large farms depopulate the kingdom, and increase servitude; that a long peace is necessary to our salvation; and that peace
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can only be preserved by a superior fleet.

Probably that excellent politician old Time will also convince us, that monopolies are always unjust, and generally inexpedient; that a charter is a misfortune to every corporate city or town in the kingdom; that the revenues possessed by these corporations is public property, and might with great justice and universal advantage, be assumed by the legislature for the use of the public; that our national debt might be discharged by a very

N simple

simple and easy expedient ; and
that our taxes seem heavy, only be-
cause we carry them on the wrong
shoulder.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

PARLIAMENTARY ELOCUTION.

A Celebrated orator and writer hath laboured to convince us, that elocution is not only the brightest and most valuable ornament of human nature, but the most firm foundation of national importance and prosperity. If this were true, it should follow, that men are generally esteemed in proportion to their oratorical abilities, and that national prosperity hath ebbed and flowed with the tide of

elocution. Ancient and modern history prove the contrary.

In absolute monarchies elocution can avail but little : in aristocratical states that general information possessed by the nobles and their private interests, prevent its effects : in a democratical, or in a mixed government, elocution exerts all its powers with every possible advantage ; but this talent will prove salutary to the state only in proportion to the wisdom and integrity of the speaker. Now, that wisdom and integrity are not always inseparable

inseparable from elocution, hath been but too frequently evinced by flagrant examples. Elocution therefore is always an equivocal talent: in a bad man, it is evidently a public curse.

The British House of Commons hath, during the present century, exhibited several conspicuous examples of rapid elocution; but there is a wide difference between rapid elocution and real oratorical abilities. A man may be able to remain two hours upon his legs, without the least effect on the reason or passions

of his audience : he may riot in all the figurative luxuriance of expression, and yet fall infinitely short of that persuasive energy which constitutes a real orator. I could indicate a member of the present House of Commons, whose florid imagination, rapid succession of ideas, and facility of expression, hath frustrated the effect of an honest propensity to serve his country ; his tropes and figures never reached the heart ; they left no impression on the mind ; being the phantoms of imagination, the imagination *only* of his hearers was affected ; they were,

for

for a time, amused ; but even that effect hath now so entirely ceased, that his harangues are dreaded as prolix, tedious, and unimportant.

I could point to another gentleman, on the same side of the house, who, with equal volubility, possesses language, dialect, pronunciation, and manner, highly polished. He, frequently indeed, for want of matter, or sufficient previous digestion and arrangement, repeats his ideas ; but we bear the repetition as we bear an actor in the farce, whom we have already seen in the play—be-

cause he has changed his dress. This gentleman's natural elocution is wonderfully great; he possesses, *almost*, every requisite to constitute a persuasive, a powerful orator; yet these singular abilities were insufficient to prevent his plunge into the Po; whence, doubtless, he will never emerge.

As to that honourable member, who speaks with no other design than to make his audience laugh, he totally mistakes his situation; he would be more in his element on
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the stage of a booth in Bartholomew-fair.

The noble lord in the blue ribbon speaks neither eloquently nor gracefully; but his replies are often pertinent, witty, and severe: nevertheless he commands nothing more than a few muscles in the faces of his auditors; recollecting his former eminence, they are offended and disgusted with his present humility: they know his rapacity, they despise his versatility, and they feel the consequences of his political incapacity.

Such

Such are the great champions of opposition to the present minister ; the youngest and most inexperienced minister this kingdom ever beheld. The man after God's own heart was, I think, a stripling when he slew the Hercules of the Philistines. These champions of opposition want neither resolution nor abilities ; but they want principle, they want virtue, they want integrity, they want that uniformity of character, which casts so deep a tarnish on the reputation of the great Roman orator, and without which the most cogent and melodious elocution is founding brass

brass and tinkling cymbals. " It
 " was not (says the Greek historian)
 " by the power of eloquence alone,
 " that Pericles governed the Athe-
 " nians ; the orator was a man of
 " probity, and his character unble-
 " mished."

An

*An UTOPIAN SCHEME, for the
Consideration of the Reverend
Mr. Wyvill.*

THE spirit of our constitution requires, that every subject should be actually represented in parliament; that he should assent to every new law through the medium of a delegate either nominated by himself or by a voluntary deputation. Our ancestors, conceiving this fundamental principle of our constitution to be *literally* impracticable,

cable, relinquished the unalienable right of election to men of property and to corporations instituted by the crown. In this act of acquiescence the spirit of the constitution was entirely lost, evaporated. Every attempt to meliorate a broken constitution is doubtless praise worthy ; but if there be any possibility of a radical cure, it were certainly much more rational to try the experiment. Virtual representation is mere nonsense. According to the present mode of electing members, every man who does not actually vote, is not represented at all.

Thus a very great majority of the people are unjustly deprived of a natural, a constitutional privilege. To take from the present voters their exclusive power of election, were a necessary act of justice to the rest of the community. Every species of monopoly and exclusion is inequitable, and should therefore be abolished.

Equity, and the spirit of the constitution, require that every rational individual, paying taxes, should actually vote, either personally or by deputation, for a member
or

or members to serve in parliament.

Can this be done?—Very easily.

Let each county send a number of members in proportion to its number of inhabitants. Let these members be elected, not by the whole county, but by a certain number of *electors* deputed by each parish, and chosen by a majority of the heads of families. Let the number of electors from each parish be according to the number of inhabitants, and let elections for electors, and for members, be triennial. Thus every man, woman, and child, would be,

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not virtually, but actually represented by members elected either personally or by delegates of their own choosing.



F I N I S.

